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S A T Y R  
AGAINST  
W I T.

by Mr Rich. Blackmore

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L O N D O N:

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## A

# Satyr against WIT.

WHO can forbear, and tamely silent sit,  
 And see his Native Land undone by Wit ?  
 Boast not, *Britannia*, of thy happy Peace,  
 What if Campaigns and Sea-Engagements cease,  
 Wit a worse Plague does mightily encrease ?  
 Some monstrous Crimes to Ages past unknown  
 Have surely pull'd this heavy Judgment down.  
 Fierce Insect-Wits draw out their noisy Swarms,  
 And threaten Ruin more than Foreign Arms.  
 O'er all the Land the hungry Locusts spread  
 Gnaw every Plant, taint every flowry Bed,  
 And crop each budding Virtue's tender Head.

How happy were the old unpolished Times,  
 As free from Wit as other modern Crimes ?  
 As our Forefathers Vig'rous were and Brave ;  
 So they were Virtuous, Wise, Discreet and Grave,  
 Detesting both alike the Wit and Knave.  
 They justly Wits and Fools believ'd the same,  
 And Jester was for both the common Name.

Their

Their Minds for Empire form'd would never quit  
 Their noble Roughness, and dissolve in Wit.  
 For Busines born and bred to Martial Toil,  
 They rais'd the Glory of *Britannia's Isle.*

Then she her dreadful Ensigns did advance,  
 To curb *Iberia*, and to conquer *France*.  
 But this degenerate, loose and foolish Race  
 Are all turn'd Wits, and their great Stock debase.  
 Our Learning daily sinks, and Wit is grown  
 The senseless Conversation of the Town.  
 Enervated with this our Youth have lost  
 That stubborn Virtue, which we once could boast.  
 The Plague of Wit prevails, I fear 'tis vain  
 Now to attempt its Fury to restrain.

It takes Men in the Head, and in the Fit OH  
 They lose their Senses, and are gone in Wit.  
 By various ways their Frenzy they express,  
 Some with loose Lines run haring to the Press;  
 In Lewdness some are Wits, some only Wits in Dres.  
 Some seiz'd like *Gravar*, with Convulsions strain  
 Always to say fine Things, but strive in vain  
 Urg'd with a dry *Tenesmus* of the Brain.

Had but the People scar'd with Danger run  
 To shut up *Wills*, where first this Plague begun:  
 Had they the first infected Men convey'd  
 Strait to *Moorfields*, the Pest-house for the Head;  
 The wild Contagion might have been supprest,  
 Some few had fal'n, but we had sav'd the rest.  
 An Act like this had been a good Defence  
 Against our great Mortality of Sense,  
 But now th'Infection spreads, the Bills run high,  
 At the last Gasp of Sense ten thousand ly.

We

We meet first Youth in every House and Street,  
With all the deadly Tokens out, of Wit.

*Vannine* that look'd on all the Danger past,  
Because he scap'd so long, is seiz'd at last.  
By Pox and Hunger and by *D——n* bit  
He grins and snarles, and in his dogged Fit  
Froths at the Mouth, a certain Sign of Wit.

*Cramer* runs madly midst the sickest Crowd,  
And fain would be infected, if he cou'd.  
Under the Means he lies, frequents the Stage,  
Is very leud, and does at Learning rage.  
Pity that so much Labour should be lost  
By such a healthful Constitution crost.  
Against th' Assaults of Wit his Make is proof,  
Still his strong Nature works the Poison off.  
He still escapes, but yet is wondrous pleas'd,  
Wit to recite, and to be thought Diseas'd.  
So Hypocrites in Vice in this vile Town  
To Wickedness pretend, that's not their own.

A Bantring Spirit has our Men possest,  
And Wisdom is become a standing Jeft.  
Wit does of Virtue sure Destruction make;  
Who can produce a Wit and not a Rake?  
Wise Magistrates leud Wit do therefore hate,  
The Bane of Virtue's Treason to the State.  
While Honour fails and Honesty decays,  
In vain we beat our Heads for Means and Ways.  
What well-form'd Government or State can last,  
When Wit has laid the Peoples Virtue waste?

B The

The *Mob* of Wits is up to storm the Town,  
 To pull all Virtue and right Reason down.  
 Quite to subvert Religion's sacred Fence,  
 To set up Wit, and pull down common Sense.  
 Our Libraries they gut, and shouting bear  
 The Spoils of ruin'd Churches in the Air.  
 Their Captain *Tom* does at their Head appear,  
 And *S——d* in his Gown brings up the Rear.  
 Aloud the Church and Clergy they condemn,  
 Curse all their Order, and their God blaspheme.  
 Against all Springs of Learning they declare,  
 Against Religion's Nurseries, and swear  
 They will no *All——e*, *M——n*, or *Cb——t* spare:  
 But the leud Crew affirm by all that's good  
 They'll ne'er disperse unless they've *B——ly's* Blood.  
 For that ill-natur'd Critic has undone  
 The rarest Piece of Wit that e'er was shwon.  
 Till his rude Stroaks had thresh'd the empty Sheaf,  
 We thought there had been something else than Chaff.  
 Crown'd with Applause this Master Critic fits,  
 And round him ly the Spoils of ruin'd Wits.  
 How great a Man! What Rev'rence were his due,  
 Could he suppress the Critic's *Faftus* too?  
 As certain Words will Lunaticks enrage,  
 Who just before appear'd sedate and sage.  
 So do but *Lock* or *Books* or *Bentley name*,  
 The Wit's in clammy Sweats; or in a Flame.

Horror and Shame! What would the Madmen have?

They dig up learned *Bernard's* peaceful Grave,  
 The Sacred-Urn of famous *Stillingfleet*,  
 We see prophan'd by the leud Sons of Wit.  
 The skilful *Ty——n's* Name they dare invade,  
 And yet they are undone without his Aid.

*Ty——n*

*Ty*—n with base Reproaches they pursue,

Just as his *Moorfields* Patients use to do.

For next to Virtue, Learning they abhor,

Laugh at Discretion, but at Busines more.

A Wit's an idle, wretched Fool of Parts,

That hates all Liberal and Mechanick Arts.

Wit does enfeeble and debauch the Mind,

Before to Busines or to Arts inclin'd.

How useless is a sauntring empty Wit,

Only to please with Jests at Dinner fit ?

What hopeful Youths for Bar and Bench design'd,

Seduc'd by Wit have learned *Coke* declin'd ?

For what has Wit to do with Sense or Law ?

Can that in Titles find or mend a Flaw ?

Can Wit supply great *T*—by's nervous Sense ?

Or *S*—*ome*'s more than *Roman* Eloquence ?

Which way has *H*—*h* gain'd Universal Fame ?

What makes the World thy Praises, *F*—*ch*, proclaim ?

And charming *P*—'s what advanc'd thy Name ?

'Twas Application, Knowledge of the Laws,

And your vast Fund of Sense, gain'd you Applause.

The Law will ne'er support the bant'ring Breed,

A *Sl*—*oane* may sometimes there, but Wits can ne'er succeed.

*R*—*a*—*t*—*li*—*ff*e has Wit, and lavishes away

More in his Conversation every Day,

Than would supply a modern Writer's Play.

But 'tis not that, but the great Master's Skill,

Who with more Ease can cure, than *C*—*at*—*b* kill,

That does the grateful Realm with his Applauses fill.

Thy Learning *G*—*ibben*, and thy Judgment *H*—*w*,

Make you in envy'd Reputation grow.

This

This drew Invectives on you; all agree,  
From the lean Small-craft of your Faculty.  
Had you been Wits you had been both secure  
From Busines, and for Satyr too Obscure,  
Ill-natur'd, Arrogant, and very Poor.  
But let Invectives still your Names assail,  
Your Busines is to Cure, and theirs to Rail.  
Let 'em proceed and make your Names a Sport  
In leud Lampoons, they've Time and Leisure for't.  
Despise their Spite, the Thousands whom you raise  
From threaten'd Death will bless you all their Days,  
And spend the Breath you sav'd, in just and lasting Praise.  
But Wit as now 'tis manag'd would undo  
The Skill and Virtues we admire in you.  
In Garth the Wit the Doctor has undone,  
In S——d the Divine, Heav'ns guard poor Adanson.  
An able Senator is lost in M——l,  
And a fine Scholar sunk by Wit in B——l.  
After his foolish Rhimes both Friends and Foes  
Conclude they know, who did not write his Prose.

Wit does our Schools and Colleges invade,  
And has of Letters vast Destruction made.  
Has laid the Muses choicest Gardens wast,  
Broke their Inclosures and their Groves defac't.  
We strive in Jests each other to exceed,  
And shall e'er long forget to Write or Read.  
Unless a Fund were settled once that cou'd  
Make our deficient Sense and Learning good,  
Nothing can be expected, for the Debt  
By this loose Age contracted, is so great,  
To set the Muses mortgag'd Acres free,  
Our Bankrupt Sons must sell out-right the Fee.

The

The present Age has all their Treasure spent,  
They can't the Int'rest pay at Five per Cent.  
What to discharge it can we hope to raise  
From D<sup>ur</sup>fy's, or from Poet D<sup>ur</sup>n<sup>st</sup>'s Plays,  
Or G<sup>oo</sup>tb<sup>r</sup>'s Lampoon with little in't but Praise?

O S<sup>er</sup>, T<sup>bot</sup>, D<sup>set</sup>, M<sup>gue</sup>,  
Gr<sup>y</sup>, Sb<sup>ld</sup>, C<sup>d</sup>sh, P<sup>ke</sup>, V<sup>in</sup>, you  
Who in Parnassus have Imperial Sway,  
Whom all the Muses Subjects here obey,  
Are in your Service and receive your Pay,  
Exert your Sovereign Power, in Judgment fit  
To regulate the Nation's Grievance, Wit  
Pity the cheated Folks that every Day  
For Copper Wit good Sterling Silver pay.  
If once the Muses Chequer would deny  
To take false Wit, it would lose its currency  
Not a base Piece would pass, that pass'd before  
Just wash'd with Wit, or thinly plated o'er.

Set forth your Edict, let it be enjoynd  
That all defective Species be recovn'd.  
St. E<sup>ver</sup>m<sup>on</sup>t and R<sup>esid<sup>or</sup></sup>, both are fit  
To oversee the Coining of our Wit.  
Let these be made the Masters of Essay,  
They'll every Piece of Metal touch and weigh,  
And tell which is too light, which has too much Allay.  
'Tis true, that when the course and worthless Dross  
Is purg'd away, there will be mighty Loss.  
Ev'n C<sup>ongre</sup>s, S<sup>an</sup>, Manly W<sup>akey</sup>,  
When thus refin'd will grievous Suff'fers be,  
Into the melting Pot when D<sup>ur</sup>n<sup>st</sup> comes,  
What horrid Stench will rise, what noisome Fumes?

How will he shrink, when all his leud Allay,  
 And wicked Mixture shall be purg'd away?  
 When once his boasted Heaps are melted down,  
 A Chest full scarce will yield one Sterling Crown.  
 Those who will ~~Dun~~<sup>not</sup> melt and think to find  
 A goodly Mass of Bullion left behind,  
 Do, as th' *Hibernian Wit*, who as 'tis told,  
 Burnt his gilt Leather to collect the Gold.

But what remains will be so pure, 'twill bear  
 Th' Examination of the most severe.  
 'Twill ~~S~~<sup>er</sup>'s Scales and ~~T~~<sup>o</sup>bot's Test abide,  
 And with their Mark please all the World beside.

But when our Wit's call'd in, what will remain  
 The Muses learned Commerce to maintain?  
 How pensive will our Beaus and Ladies fit?  
 They'll mutiny for want of ready Wit.  
 That such a failure no Man may incense,  
 Let us erect a Bank for Wit and Sense.  
 A Bank whose current Bills may Payment make,  
 Till new Mill'd Wit shall from the Mint come back.

Let ~~S~~<sup>er</sup>, ~~D~~<sup>or</sup> set, ~~Sh~~<sup>ell</sup> ~~the~~ ~~ld~~, ~~M~~<sup>an</sup> ~~the~~ ~~ngue~~,  
 Lend but their Names, the Project then will do.  
 The Bank is fixt if these will under-write,  
 They pay the vastest Sums of Wit at sight.  
 These are good Men, in whom we all agree,  
 Their Notes for Wit are good Security.  
 Duncombs and Claytons in Parnassus all,  
 Who cannot sink unless the Hill should fall.  
 Their Bills, tho' ne'er supported by Trustees,  
 Will through Parnassus circulate with ease.

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If these come in, the Bank will quickly fill,  
All will be scrambling up *Parnassus* Hill.  
They'll crowd the Muses Hall and throng to write  
Great Sums of Wit, and will be Gainers by't.

*Vaux* and *Congreve* both are Wealthy, they  
Have Funds of Standard-Sense, need no Allay,  
And yet mix'd Metal oft they pass away.  
The Bank may safely their Subscriptions take,  
But let 'em for their Reputation's sake,  
Take care their Payments they in Sterling make.

*Codron* will under-write his *Indian* Wit, *Codrington*  
Far-fetch'd indeed, so 'twill the Ladies fit.  
By Hearsay he's a Scholar, and they say  
The Man's a sort of Wit too in his way.

Let 'em receive whatever *Prix* brings,  
In nobler Strains no happy Genius sings.  
'Tis Complaisance when to divert his Friends,  
He to *facetious* *Fancies* condescends.

*Tate* will subscribe, but set no Payment-Day,  
For his slow Muse you must with Patience stay,  
He's honest, and as Wit comes in, will pay.

But how would all this new Contrivance Prize,  
How high in value would their Actions rise?  
Would *Fr—k* engraft his solid, manly Sense,  
His Learning *Lec—k*, *Flatwood* his Eloquence.  
The Bank when thus establish'd will supply  
Small Places, for the little, loitt'ring Fry  
That follow *G—tb*, or at *Will U—'*s ply.

Their

Their Station will be low; but ne'ertheless  
For this Provision they shou'd Thanks express: to God & His  
'Tis sad to be a Wit and Disherless.

*T*o the great Wit-Jobber of the Age,  
And all the Muses Brokers will engage  
Their several Friends to try the Actions up,  
And all the railing Mouths of Envy stop.

*S*ee Ye Lords who o'er the Muses Realm preside,  
Their Int'rests manage and their Empire guide;  
Regard your Care, regard the sacred State  
Laid by Invaders wast and desolate.  
Tartars and Scythians haye in barb'rous Bands  
Rifled the Muses and o'er-run their Lands.  
The Native Subjects who in Peace enjoy'd  
The happy Seat, are by the Sword destroy'd.

Gardens and Groves *Paraffus* did adorn,  
Condemn'd to Thistles now, and curst with Thorn,  
Instead of Flowers and Herbs of wholsom use,  
It does rank Weeds and pois'nous Plants produce.  
Fitter to be for *Witches* a Retreat,  
*Owls*, *Satyrs*, *Monkies*, than the Muses Seat.  
Ev'n these debauch'd by *Dante* and his Crew,  
Turn Bawds to Vice and wicked Aims pursue,  
Therefore some just and wholesome Laws ordain,  
That may this wild Licentiousness restrain:  
To Virtue and to Merit have regard,  
To punish learn, you know how to reward.

*C*Let those Correction have, and not Applause,  
That Heav'n affront and ridicule its Laws,  
No sober Judge will Atheism e'er permit  
To pass for Sense, or Blasphemy for Wit.

*Then*

Declare

Declare that what's Obscene shall give Offence,  
*Let want of Decency be want of Sense.*

Send out your Guards to scow'r the Ways and seize  
 The Footpads, Outlaws, Rogues and Rapparees,  
 That in the Muses Country rob and kill,  
 And make *Parnassus* worse than *Shooter's Hill*.  
 Poetic Justice should on these be shown,  
 Or soon the Muses State must be undone.  
 For now an honest Man can't peep abroad,  
 And all chaste Muses dread the dangerous Road.  
 If in *Parnassus* any *needy Wit*  
 Should filch and Petty Larceny commit,  
 If he should rifle Books, and Pilferer turn,  
 An Inch beside the Nose the *Felon* burn.  
 Let him distinguish'd by this Mark appear,  
 And in his Cheek a plain *Signetur* wear.

Chastise the Poets who our Laws invade,  
 And hold with *France* for Wit an Owling Trade.  
 Felonious G — pursuing this Design,  
 Smuggles *French* Wit, as others Silks and Wine.  
 But let his Suff'rings doubly be severe,  
 For he both steals it th're, and runs it here!

Condemn all those who 'gainst the Muses Laws  
 Sollicit Votes, and canvas for Applause.  
 When *Torman* writes he rattles up and down,  
 And makes what Friends he can, to make the Town,  
 By Noise and Violence they force a Name,  
 For this leud Town has *Setters* too for Fame;  
 It is not Merit now that recommends,  
 But he's allow'd most Sense, that makes most Friends.

In Panegyrick let it be a Rule,  
 That for the Sense none praise a Wealthy Fool.  
 D——n condemn who taught Men how to make  
 Of Dunces Wits, an Angel of a Rake.  
 By Treats and Gifts our Youth may now commence,  
 Wits without Brains, and Scholars without Sense.  
 They cry up *Darfel* for a Wit, to treat  
 Let him forbear, and they their Words will eat.  
 Great *Atticus* himself these Men would curse,  
 Should *Atticus* appear without his Purse.  
 Of any Price you may bespeak a Name,  
 For Characters they cut, and retail Fame.  
 Bounty's the Measure of a Patron's Mind,  
 For they have still most Sense, that prove most kind.  
 Fame on Great Men's a Charge that still goes on,  
 For Wits, like Scriv'ners, take for *Pro* and *Con*.  
 Without his Gold what generous *Oran* writ,  
 Had ne'er been Standard, sheer *Athenian* Wit.

Those who by Satyr would reform the Town,  
 Should have some little Merit of their own,  
 And not be Rakes themselves below Lampoon.  
 For all their Libels Panegyrick's are,  
 They're still read backward like a Witch's Pray'r.  
 Ell——t's Reproofs who does not make his Sport ?  
 Who'll e'er repent that S——d does exhort ?  
 Therefore let Satyr-Writers be supprest,  
 Or be reform'd by cautious D——set's Test.  
 'Tis only D——set's Judgment can command,  
 Wit the worst Weapon in a Madman's Hand.  
 The Biting Things by that great Master said,  
 Flow from rich Sense, but theirs from want of Bread.  
 Whatever is by them in Satyr writ  
 Is Malice all, but his excess of Wit.

'To lash our Faults and Follies is his Aim,  
 Theirs is good Sense and Merit to defame.  
 In D—*set* Wit (and therefore still 'twill please)  
 Is Constitution, but in them Disease.

Care should be taken of the Impotent,  
 That in your Service have their Vigor spent.  
 They should have Pensions from the Muses State,  
 Too Old to Write, too Feeble to Translate.  
 But let the lusty Beggar-Wits that lurk  
 About the Hill, be seiz'd and set to Work.  
 Befides some Youths Debauches will commit,  
 And surfeit by their undigested Wit.  
 Th' intoxicating Draught they cannot bear,  
 It takes their Heads before they are aware.  
 Weak Brothers by Excesses it appears  
 Have oft been laid up Months, and some whole Years.  
 By one Debauch a tender Wit was try'd,  
 And he 'tis known was likely to have dy'd.  
 That neither Sick nor Poor you may neglect,  
 For all the Muses *Invalids* erect,  
 An Hospital upon *Parnassus* Hill,  
 And settle Doctors there of Worth and Skill.  
 This Town can numbers for your Service spare,  
 That live obscure and of Success despair.  
*Fracar* has many four Invectives said,  
 And Jests upon his own Profession spred,  
 And with good Reason, 'twill not find him Bread.  
 And some such Doctors, sure you may persuade  
 To labour at th' Apothecary's Trade.  
 They'll Med'cines make, and at the Mortar sweat,  
 Let 'em pound Drugs, they have no Brains to beat.

To pull out hairs and tolls in his arm  
This is good sense has more to determine  
In O — At the same time will believe  
He distinguishes, but in much disorder

Carefully of work of his importance  
This is your service take their labor done  
They found great pleasure from the noble service  
To O it to work too I speak of themselves  
But let the just reward — in that work  
About the Hill, to find a way to work  
Beside some young people will come  
And forget about negligence will

Hate of need left the mountain, and took a place  
By one's dependence a leader will make us  
You see the town as likely to leave by  
The people give poor you may know  
How all the while we work

An old man upon a hill  
An old dog or mice of world has seen  
This town can manage for your service  
The hills oppose the end of success despite

Learn this truly for knowledge  
An old man his own profession bring  
An old good horse, will not find him  
An old dog before, that you may bring  
To whom is in the neighborhood of  
This town where he is the mountain known  
For the pony Dake, they have no time to pass

